Plans for the International Heliophysical Year (IHY)

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The International Heliophysical Year (IHY), an international program of scientific collaboration to understand the external drivers of planetary environments, will be conducted in 2007. This will be a major international event of great interest to the member States. The IHY will involve the deployment of new instrumentation, new observations from the ground and in space, and an education component.

The IHY 2007 will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) in 1957. The IGY was organized to study global phenomena of the Earth and Geospace involving about thousands of scientists from many nations, working at thousands of stations, around the world to obtain simultaneous, global observations from the ground and space.

Building on results obtained during IGY 1957, the IHY will expand to the study of universal processes in the solar system that affect the interplanetary and terrestrial environments. The study of energetic events in the solar system will pave the way for safe human space travel to the Moon and planets in the future, and it will serve to inspire the next generation of space physicists.

Specific objectives of the IHY are to

1. Provide benchmark measurements of the response of the magnetosphere, the ionosphere, the lower atmosphere and Earth surface to identify global processes and drivers which affect the terrestrial environment and climate
2. Global study of the Sun-heliosphere system outward to the heliopause
3. Foster international scientific cooperation in the study of Heliophysical phenomena now and in the future
4. Communicate the unique scientific results of the IHY to the interested scientific community and to the general public

These objectives will be attained through a series of coordinated campaigns that include observations, data analysis and modeling to attack global questions involving universal process throughout the solar system.